

# **FY 2003 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **TO THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY**



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In FY03, the Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) made tremendous efforts to engage different Asian and Pacific Islander (API) ethnic groups, and to keep abreast of their needs and concerns. OAPIA organized and facilitated public and private programs on public safety, human rights, economic development, housing, employment, social services, public health, transportation, education, and multi-cultural development. One of its missions is to bridge the communications gap between the District government/service providers and its API constituents. Outreach activities primarily aimed to accomplish three objectives: 1) to better understand community concerns and issues; 2) to ensure the involvement of the API community in government events and proceedings; and, 3) to inform the community on available government services and programs. In FY03, OAPIA assisted 30 community-based organizations (CBOs) and managed 45 cases, participated in 100 community events, conducted 90 visits to CBOs and service centers, and facilitated 25 meetings between community members and D.C. agencies.

In coordinating 17 D.C. agencies participating in the Mayor's Initiative to serve APIs with limited English proficiency, OAPIA clearly defined agency responsibilities and reporting procedures for the implementation of each agency action plans. Quarterly agency-wide meetings were conducted to discuss the progress in five specific areas: 1) document translations, 2) hiring of bilingual API staff, 3) multi-cultural sensitivity training, 4) community outreach, and 5) formation of partnerships with community-based organizations. OAPIA provided quarterly status reports to the Mayor with specific recommendations for improvements. OAPIA aims to assist District agencies in developing a long-term plan and programs to meet the needs of the immigrant community-at-large and the Federal Title VI requirement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### **I. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND:**

The 2000 Census shows that the API population in DC increased by 39% (for Asian only) and by 66% (for Asian in combination with some other race) from the 1990 Census. This is the fastest growing rate for any minority ethnic group. According to the Washington Post, APIs own almost two-thirds of the small business licenses in DC. Most of these APIs are first generation immigrants with language and cultural barriers, and require assistance to gain access to government programs and services. The 2000 Census also shows that 8,974 of the District's API population speak an Asian language at home and half of them cannot speak English "very well." Information obtained from DC Public Schools (DCPS) indicates that two-thirds of the API students in DCPS are either non-English proficient or limited English proficient (LEP). As the District's API community continues to grow, the communication divide between the District government/service providers and its API constituents will also continue to increase. OAPIA was created to bridge this divide and connect the District government to its API constituents.

Created in 1987 as part of the Executive Office of the Mayor, OAPIA became an independent agency in FY 2002 through D.C. Act 14-85, "District of Columbia's Asian and Pacific Islander Community Development Act 2000." OAPIA's mission is to ensure that the full range of health, education, employment, and social services are available to the API community in DC. OAPIA

advises the Mayor, the Council and other agencies within the District of Columbia Government on the views, needs, and concerns of the District's fastest growing minority group. OAPIA works with all levels of government to ensure the delivery of information and services to the API Community.

In FY03, OAPIA staff included an Executive Director, a Community Service Representative and a Program Specialist, all being bilingual. Due to the varied and specific needs of the API community and limited staff capacity, many responsibilities were shared among all staff members. Together, staff members organized and facilitated public and private programs on public safety, human rights, economic development, housing, employment, social services, public health, transportation, education, and multi-cultural development.

OAPIA's mission is to increase access to government services and programs for residents with limited English proficiency through advocacy, collaboration with community organizations, community outreach, and work with government agencies. The following sections provide an overview of OAPIA's activities and accomplishments for FY2003.

## **II. ADVOCACY**

OAPIA serves as the primary agency for the Mayor and city government to address issues of concern to the API community. The need for equal access to government information and services was the major concern for the API community in FY03 and became the top priority for OAPIA. The advocacy role OAPIA plays for the API community is to promote awareness and civic participation of the community through needs assessments, multi-cultural activities, and neighborhood engagement. As a result, OAPIA was effective increasing city-wide awareness of the API community and engaging civic participation by its community members for FY03.

OAPIA assisted APIs in a number of complaint cases regarding small business practices, vendor issues, public safety, public education, civil rights, hate crimes, and discrimination by bringing API concerns to the attention of District agencies for resolution. OAPIA continues to aid dozens of API individuals including immigrants with limited English proficiency, the unemployed, homeless, at-risk children, parents, seniors, and small business owners. OAPIA also assists APIs in resolving civil rights and discrimination cases.

## **III. WORKING WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

OAPIA addresses community problems and responds to requests through close collaborations with community organizations and government agencies. In FY03, OAPIA assisted 30 CBOs and managed 45 cases, and participated in over 100 community events. OAPIA staff conducted 90 visits to CBOs and service centers, and facilitated 25 meetings between community members and D.C. agencies. OAPIA made enormous efforts to engage different API ethnic groups, to keep abreast of their needs and concerns. Staff members provided regular on-site assistance at API CBOs so that needs and emerging issues of the community were identified and addressed by District agencies.

OAPIA relays API community issues to government/agency representatives and, with their help, seeks ways to resolve the community's problems. Most importantly, OAPIA keeps the line of communication open between the API residents and the D.C. government. The following is a

sample of some activities OAPIA organized and participated in collaboration with API community organizations and government agencies to ensure that the API community's needs and requests are addressed:

- Engaged many API residents to participate in the Mayor's Crime Forum II.
- Played an active role in supporting the API community's Crime Victim Assistance Program and attended its monthly meetings.
- Conducted regular outreach activities relating to public safety to local merchants in collaboration with the Asian Liaison Unit of the Police Department (MPD).
- Facilitated three meetings between MPD 4D Commander and members of the API community for problem solving with regards to safety concerns.
- Worked with the Emergency Management Agency to facilitate an emergency preparedness meeting with the community and provided simultaneous interpretations for limited English proficient individuals in Vietnamese and Korean.
- Visited hundreds of local merchants to alert them about drug activities in their neighborhoods, and canvassed local stores to stop selling items that may be used as drug paraphernalia.
- Facilitated several meetings between the Korean American Dry Cleaners Association and Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) to resolve the issue of the required stationary engineer licensee for drycleaners.
- Assisted Korean American Roadway Vendors' Association in communicating with DCRA regarding the practice and enforcement of the vendor lottery process.
- Assisted DCRA and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) in communicating with several bus companies in Chinatown about government regulation and compliance issues
- Informed merchants with limited English proficiency of the new regulation on ATM license fee issues.
- Assisted the Korean American Business Association (KABA) and H Street Community Development Corporation in hosting an ethnic press roundtable to inform liquor license holders of compliance checks.
- Assisted the Office of Tax and Revenue in facilitating two meetings with merchants to resolve the issue of cigarette tax violations.
- Coordinated a meeting between KABA and the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) in dealing with liquor license issues.
- Cosponsored a community block party with KABA to promote better relations between local Korean merchants and residents.
- Worked with community members in Ward 5 to resolve a racial conflict initiated by cultural misunderstanding and interracial miscommunication.
- Updated the ethnic media and community organization lists, which is posted on the OAPIA website as a guide for the community.
- Participated and cosponsored APA Heritage month events.
- Provided multicultural training for the Mayor and the Cabinet during the APA Heritage celebration.
- Assisted in producing the first crime victim assistance educational videotape in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

#### **IV. COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Due to the language and cultural barriers often encountered by APIs with limited English, OAPIA took a proactive, grass-roots approach to outreach to the residents. OAPIA, through the language capabilities of its staff, was able to have direct communication with Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese-speaking clients. These three languages represent the largest linguistically-isolated Asian ethnic groups in the city. The outreach activities aim to accomplish three objectives: 1) to better understand communities concerns and issues; 2) to ensure the involvement of API community in governmental events and proceedings; and, 3) to inform the community about available government services and programs.

OAPIA actively recruited the participation of Asian ethnic media to report District-based programs and running public announcements of city events in their newspapers. Many of OAPIA's activities and accomplishments were featured in several newspapers, including Asian Fortune (English), World Journal (Chinese), Korean Daily (Korean), Korea Times (Korean), Pho Nho (Vietnamese), and other ethnic news media. In addition, OAPIA produced and distributed updated copies of its brochure. The success of OAPIA's outreach efforts was reflected by the APIs' active participation during District government events.

***Community Empowerment Initiative:*** To better serve the API community and to reach out to more residents and merchants who may have been underserved, OAPIA conducts a needs assessment survey on a regular basis of residents and merchants in various neighborhoods/wards, followed with a series of educational workshops addressing the issues identified. Below is a summary of some of the major activities, through which more than 1200 residents and merchants were reached out to, and 8 workshops and 3 cultural training programs were conducted:

OAPIA OUTREACH	PERIOD	CUSTOMER SERVED	AREAS OF NEEDS ADDRESSED
<b>Small Business Empowerment Project</b>			
Ward 8 Merchants Workshop	8/20/02-10/17/02	120 stores visited	Safety, improving customer relations.
Ward 4 Merchants Workshop	1/15/03-3/5/03	150 stores visited	Safety alerts, education, and business regulation updates
Ward 7 Merchants Workshop	3/6/03-4/30/03	100 stores visited	Safety alerts, education, and business regulation updates
Ward 5 Merchants Workshop	5/1/03-6/19/03	50 stores visited	Reoccurring burglaries, safety education, sanitation issues.
Ward 8 Merchants Workshop	7/1/03-8/28/03	100 stores visited	Tobacco tax stamp, other tax issue, juvenile related crimes, customer relations.
Ward 1 Merchants Workshop	8/29/03-9/30/03	80 stores visited	Updates on new business regulations (DCRA)
<b>API Family and Youth Empowerment Project</b>			
Ward 2 Residents Workshop	11/1/02-12/17/02	50 Chinese families visited	Affordable housing
Ward 1 Vietnamese Workshop	5/1/03-6/26/03	70 families visited	Affordable housing, landlord/tenant issue
Ward 1 Youth Workshop	8/1/03-9/29/03	50 families and students visited	Prevention on gang violence, HIV/AIDS, and substance abuse
<b>City-Wide API Community Outreach</b>			
API Heritage Month Celebration	3/1/03-5/30/03	500 families & merchants visited	Town hall meeting, a photo exhibition on Asian diversity, cultural sensitivity training for DC employees, cultural celebration.
Monthly E-Newsletter	Monthly	About 500 APIs in the D.C. metropolitan area	Community and government events, job and internship announcements, grant opportunity and relevant announcements. Electronic distribution of information.

### **PARTICIPATION IN CITY-WIDE MAYORAL EVENTS**

CITY-WIDE MAYORAL EVENT	PARTICIPATION	DATE	OAPIA ROLE
Mayor's API Town Hall Meeting	About 300 APIs attended. Several ethnic API media organizations covered the event.	5/7/03	Primary co-organizer, partnered with the D.C. Commission on Asian/Pacific Islander Affairs (DCCAPIA). Created a multilingual forum where residents, business people, and leaders were encouraged to address the Mayor.
API Multicultural Sensitivity Training	Over 200 D.C. employees attended.	5/6/03	Primary co-organizer, partnered with DCCAPIA.
Mayor's Forum on Crime and Prevention I & II	About 40 APIs attended the bilingual session. Over 800 people total attended the forum.	1/25/03	Worked with Asian Liaison Unit (ALU) of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to design and organize a bilingual session for Asian residents.

			Translated event flyer into Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese; disseminated the information through email listserv, ethnic media resources, and personal community visits.
Mayor's Inaugural Ceremony	As many as 100 API community members and leaders participated.	1/2/03	Informed community members of how event tickets were distributed, contacted ethnic media, and arranged the transportation for the area's Asian seniors to attend the events.
Citizen Summit III	Over 250 APIs sat at 18 tables designated for bilingual simultaneous interpretation and translation. 10% of the event's participants were API.	11/15/03	Provided on-site assistance to many API participants with limited English proficiency, especially in registration, table discussions, and other logistics.

The success of OAPIA's outreach lies in OAPIA's close collaboration with local API community-based organizations and District agencies and the assurances that all OAPIA-sponsored and assisted events are guaranteed to have simultaneous interpretation.

## **V. MAYOR'S API INITIATIVE**

To ensure equal access to government services to the LEP APIs, Mayor Williams has engaged 17 major service agencies to participate in his Initiative on Asians & Pacific Islanders. The initiative undertakes a city-wide and systematic approach to addressing the needs of the underserved API community. OAPIA is charged with administering and coordinating the implementation of this plan. Since the inception of the Initiative in 2000, much progress has been made in serving the LEP population. Please visit OAPIA's website, <http://www.apia.dc.gov> for detailed information.

Each of the agencies provides an annual, agency action plan on how to improve services to LEP APIs in the following five areas:

- **Document Translations:** Vital materials have been translated into Korean, Chinese, and/or Vietnamese.
- **Diversifying the Workforce:** Bilingual, sometimes multi-lingual, personnel have been hired by participating agencies, including ABRA, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH).
- **Multi-cultural Sensitivity Training:** Most participating agencies have had cultural awareness trainings for front-line employees, either within their own departments or by attending OAPIA's sensitivity training.
- **Community Partnerships:** OAPIA encouraged the participating agencies to conduct outreach and strengthen partnerships with organizations that have long-standing trust with API populations in the District. KABA, Boat People S.O.S.-D.C., the Chinatown Steering Committee, and the Asian Service Center are examples of organizations that are working with D.C. agencies to communicate with the Asian community and/or cosponsor events.
- **Community Outreach:** Events, such as the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebrations, town hall meetings, and community outreach days, and informational

seminars, such as those conducted by OTR and DCRA officials, recognize and serve the API community.

OAPIA has organized quarterly agency-wide meetings to discuss the progress in those five areas, to update agencies on any news or problems, to offer suggestions, and to act as a resource. Each agency also has a designated API coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Agency Action Plan, reporting the agency's progress at the agency-wide meetings, and submitting a quarterly status report to the Mayor through OAPIA. Various agency heads attend the monthly Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs meetings to update the Commission on the status of their agencies' Action Plan.

On 60 different occasions in FY03, OAPIA met individually with API coordinators or directors of agencies to advance the Mayor's Initiative.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

In FY 2003, the Williams Administration has worked to include the API community in the fold of city services. However, there remains much more to be done. As the District becomes increasingly diverse, the District government is evolving to meet the needs of its residents. Eventually, we expect that each District agency will develop its own long-term plan and programs to meet the needs of the immigrant community-at-large and the Federal Title VI requirement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Currently, this Administration is working to consolidate the API initiative with a greater LEP initiative, in conjunction with the Office of Human Rights and the Office of Latino Affairs, so that all limited English proficient residents and merchants have equal access to city services. One of the on-going challenges of OAPIA is retaining and expanding staffing resources to better serve the API community. OAPIA continues to work with the City Council, District agencies, and community-based organizations to fulfill our city's promise of serving all its residents, regardless of cultural or language barriers. OAPIA is committed to becoming more visible and effective in outreaching to the growing API community to advance the Mayor's priorities and action agenda.